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# Methodology of study of corruption in higher education

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## Methodology of Study of Corruption in Higher Education

Essay review of

Woshburn, Jennifer. (2005). *University Incorporated: The Corporate Corruption of American Higher Education*. New York, New York: Basic Books. Pp. 326. ISBN 0465090516

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### Biography.

Ararat Osipian is a PhD candidate in the Department of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations at Peabody College of Education at Vanderbilt (USA). He holds Doctorate in Political Economy from Kharkov National University (Ukraine) and MA in Economics from Vanderbilt University. His research interests include corruption in higher education and inequalities in access to higher education in international perspective, nexus of education and economic growth, modern welfare states, and political economy of transition.

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Higher education in the U.S. may be characterized by complexity and plurality of forms. The Ivy League universities and those trying to replicate them, or so-called “wanna be” universities, coexist with numerous large public institutions, four-year colleges and community colleges. While the former are actively involved in business-driven projects in research and services, the latter are quite distant from these processes. Nevertheless, all of them serve the industries, first of all by training professionals for these industries. In this sense community colleges are not less linked to businesses than major research universities. Curriculum in community colleges is tailored to meet the demands of specific industries and more so often local labor markets. Woshburn (2005) presents the negative sides of the impact of industries on the academia in the book titled *University Incorporated: The Corporate Corruption of American Higher Education*. This book would be of high interest for policymakers, managers, and theorists. While policymakers, university administrators, and business managers will appreciate good description of forms of cooperation of industries and universities as well as problems that such cooperation creates or exacerbates and some of the prescriptions, offered by the author, theorists will find wealth of material on which to build some concepts and theories of social and ethical responsibility versus commercialization and perhaps even some interesting niches for possible corrupt activities in higher education.

Key words: corruption, education, methodology, university

JEL Codes: I22, K42

### Overview of the problem

Idea of external impact comes from the title of the book that emphasizes “corruption of...” Corruption here means erosion, negative influence, and external forces affecting internal values. Corruption is denoted as a process, not a product or outcome. Commercialization of higher education carries threat to traditional mission and internal values of academia. The author makes this argument from the position of traditionalism and position of effectiveness of the system. For us this approach appears to be somewhat unclear. If producing good specialists for industries is good and is a primary function of higher education, then why producing products, such as research and services, for industries represent corruption?

Higher education in the U.S. may be characterized by complexity and plurality of forms. The Ivy League universities and those trying to replicate them, or so-called “wanna be” universities, coexist with numerous large public institutions, four-year colleges and community colleges. While the former are actively involved in business-driven projects in research and services, the latter are quite distant from these processes. Nevertheless, all of them serve the industries, first of all by training professionals for these industries. In this sense community colleges are not less linked to businesses than major research universities. Curriculum in community colleges is tailored to meet the demands of specific industries and more so often local labor markets.

Plurality of forms of higher education is reflected in multiplicity of functions of higher education institutions. Research universities are multifunctional institutions. The major functions of these institutions are provision of healthcare services, research, and educational services. By number of employees, clients served, and total volume of transactions healthcare services are on the lead and dominate the agenda. Research is a second most important function and provision of

instructional services is the third one. Distribution of faculty time allotted to certain activities is the key in understanding structure of modern research university. It is incorrect to argue that just because research or medical services dominate instruction, university functioning is corrupt. Clear rules along with understanding about who is paying for what and how much are necessary for a fair game.

If impact of marketization is negative, it does not mean that the idea of close cooperation between universities and industries is not good. Maybe mechanisms are not good enough or maybe they have yet to be developed and reach high degree of effectiveness, as it may be the case with on-line degrees and e-commerce. Washburn prefers to focus on some particular industries and then on “hot potatoes.” One should keep in mind that despite of the strong external influence and authority of external Boards of Trust, U.S. universities are hard to abuse simply because the system is not in its infancy.

There are two major issues to be focused on:

- Time as a strategic resource;
- Changes in the national economy.

Distribution of time between research, instruction, and other functions for faculty and graduate students constitutes same problem as may be found in medical practices and legal practices. Lawyers tend to get more clients than they can actually serve with the declared and expected level of quality. The same is true for doctors, forced to run the patient conveyor under the pressure from the hospital management. Time here is a major resource and allocation of time should be of major concern. Underserved clients, be it patients or students are potential victims of abuse through the allocation of time that deviates from the norms, terms, and conditions described in the contracts and regulated by the legislation.

Structural changes in the national economy are another major consideration. As biomedical industry is growing, more research is needed to develop and advance the industry. Research universities adjust their research facilities and curriculum accordingly. Preparing more professionals for biomedical industry is a socially responsible change to the benefit of the society. It should not be regarded as corruption even if it comes at the expense of liberal arts education. Increase in research in biomedical and related fields is also beneficial for the public and should not be regarded as corruption. There is an ongoing debate about the optimal timeline for secured patents and intellectual property rights, but the right itself is an incentive to advance the frontier of knowledge.

Washburn (2005) presents the following view on restriction of access to inventions and other research findings through patents that might be detrimental to economic development and public interest: “A group of fifty-nine leading economists and scientists—including Nobel laureates Joseph Stiglitz (2001, economics) and John Sulston (2002, medicine)—wrote a public letter to the World Intellectual Property Organization, asking that it begin promoting more “open” models of innovation that don’t rely on patents. There is evidence, the letter asserted, that a high level of innovation can be achieved in some areas of the economy without proprietary protection, and that ‘excessive, unbalanced, or poorly designed intellectual property protections may be counterproductive.’ The property rights thicket has grown so dense post-Bayh-Dole that some worry the end result will be to hamper rather than foster innovation. As Richard Nelson wrote in 2003, we must not forget that ‘the market part of this Capitalist engine rests on a publicly supported scientific commons.” (p. 154) Washburn seems to be underestimating meaning of financial security of universities and necessity to fund fundamental as well as applied research. The key here is a clash between exogenous and endogenous changes.

### Structure of the work

Washburn develops the following structure in her work. First, she states the problem in general and makes introduction a complete mimicry of the entire book. Then she substantiates the problem with use of the numerous examples. Historical excursion into the business-university relations highlights major points of the work, while allowing the reader to understand historically developed views on such relationship as well as cases of the relationship, some of which are successful and others are failures. The structure is presented in Figure 1.

The problems that may be encountered while considering the structure of the book generally related to the weak theorizing and absence of any strong methodology. Conceptualization, presented in Part 3 does not convert into theories. An attempt for generalization in parts six, seven, and eight is de facto continuous line of cases and examples instead of theorizing. Prescription, given by the author in part nine is linked to generalization, but it is not strong enough. It is rather linked to part two that illuminates lessons of the history.

The entire book is filled with cases and examples from biomedical industry and medicine. At the same time the author's position creates an impression that the importance of new healthcare-related sciences is not fully recognized or accepted. The author apparently refuses to admit the fact that closer link between business and academia is unavoidable.

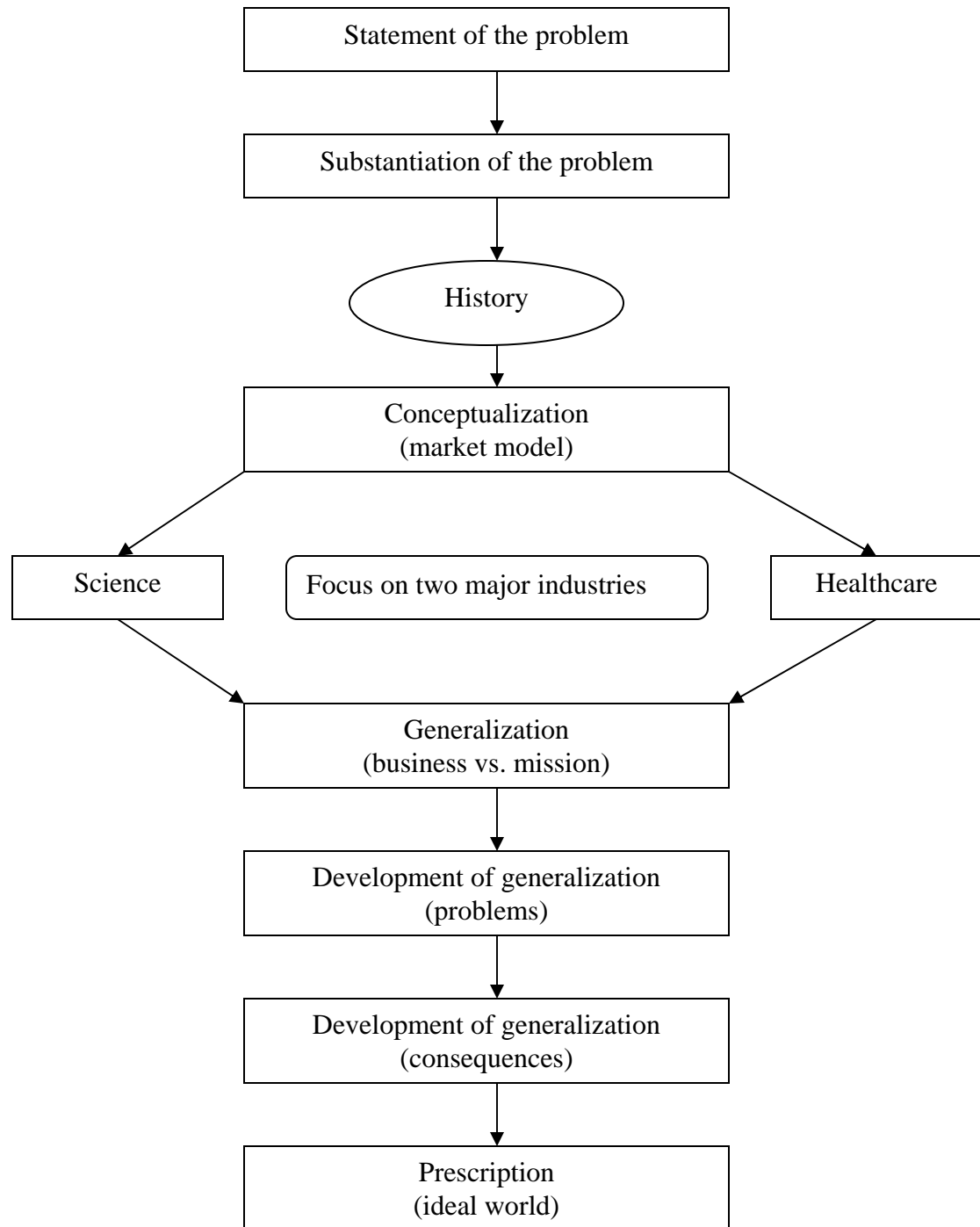


Figure 1. Structure of the "University Incorporated..."



First, healthcare industry already constitutes 16 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product and is rapidly growing. This totals to around 1.9 trillion dollars a year. This figure is larger than the entire gross domestic product of most of the world economies. Not only an industry of such scale may not be ignored, but it constitutes fundamental base for further development of business-university links and commercialization of higher education.

Second, time of philosophy as a cornerstone of liberal education is gone. It is true for Europe, the former USSR, and even more so for the U.S. In fact, philosophy itself tries its best to enter such areas of research and practice as law, medicine, public policy with emphasis on healthcare policy and education, etc. in order to prove its continuous relevance and justify its presence on campuses. Bioethics, qualitative research methods, public health policy, business ethics, and other sub-disciplines include elements of philosophical thinking.

The link between industries and universities is not limited to flows of ideas, patents, services, contracts, orders, and money. People move between industry and academia as well. Administrators, managers, professionals, professors, research professors, residents, post-docs, visiting fellows all may be met in this “channel of exchange.”

Academic community is eager to stand to its traditions, especially its part that does not draw substantial benefits from the university commercialization. Good illustration for such resistance would be recent events at Cornell University that eventually led to resignation of its president. While Cornell’s president was pushing the agenda more towards biomedical and medical research and international outreach as directions for the future development, the Board of Trustees along with the faculty body of the institution stood for the values of liberal education. However, the case of Cornell University is rather specific. The University itself is located in the middle of nowhere and has to struggle to attract major airline carriers to the local airport, while

the University Hospital and the Medical School are located in New York City. Location of the hospital is explained by its connection to the patients, i.e. clientele. Medical school, with its professional curriculum, is indivisible from the hospital. This is a good example of dominance of the industry with its professional values and market orientation over the academic preferences. Here industry takes a leading role.

Obviously, a link between business and academia exists, it is becoming stronger, and it influences universities and their structural policies. Nevertheless, such link should not be overestimated. There is no single case of merger or acquisition of any higher education institution by an industrial corporation. Furthermore, industries prefer not directly interfere with academic processes. Companies prefer to choose among the pool of applicants from different schools rather than funding particular programs in particular schools. This might be the strongest evidence of how far the industries are from academic world. This distancing may well be explained by the situation on the labor market and growing industry of higher education itself. One thing is undeniable: so far businesses only voice their needs for professionals with particular skills; they do not place orders or requests for future specialists in particular departments or universities, and they do not fund such programs.

#### Marketization of higher education

The author considers marketization as a threat to higher education, threat to excellence. Influence of commercialization and business-like operated universities is described as the following:

“These developments are hardly a secret to university presidents, administrators, professors, and students, many of whom have watched their campuses take on the look

and feel of shopping malls in recent years, replete with Starbucks, fast-food chains, and Barnes-and-Noble-operated bookstores. Thus far, however, their collective significance has yet to reverberate in popular consciousness. Ask the typical parent what are the big issues in higher education today, and you are likely to hear about the rising cost of tuition, or how competitive the admissions process has become. Missing from their list of concerns is the single greatest threat to the future of American higher education: the intrusion of market ideology into the heart of academic life.” (p. x)

This passage illustrates change in form, appearance, auxiliary facilities, but not necessarily in essence of the system. More importantly, such *a priory* negative attitude towards the recent changes seems to be an over-dramatization of the objective processes which gradually add pace. Harvard University is run by Harvard Corporation that manages \$30 billion endowment invested in stocks and bonds and some assets overseas.

Blumenstyk (2005) reports that the year 2004 was marked in higher education by a record number of start-up companies. Inventions generated high revenues and many were patented and licensed by the government. New York University received the highest licensing income of \$109,023,125 in 2004. MIT was a leader in terms of start-up companies, founding 20 companies. U.S. government has issued 270 patents to the University of California system. MIT was the leading single institution in terms of number of patents issued, 159. California Institute of Technology holds the second place with 142 patents. Total research spending in the University of California system mounted to \$2,791,777,000. For Johns Hopkins University it was \$1,594,724,411 and for MIT it was \$1,027,000,000. The data indicate how close the links between academia, industries, and the government are.

### Negative impact of industries on higher education

Washburn holds to the idea of negative impact on the quality of instruction and notices that “the job of teaching students was shunted to the side, even though the universities’ most important public function was to nurture intellectual creativity and talent.” (p. x) In our view, the emphasis should be made on the word “was.” The author focuses on negative impact of patenting, licensing, and other ways of limiting access to inventions and research products on the total social welfare. She notes that “When researchers at the University of Utah discovered an important human gene responsible for hereditary breast cancer, for example, they didn’t make it freely available to other scientists, even though we—the U.S. taxpayers—paid \$4.6 million to finance the research. They raced to patent it and gave the monopoly rights to Myriad Genetics, Inc., a start-up company founded by a University of Utah professor, which proceeded to hoard the gene and restrict other scientists from using it.” (p. xi) Washburn rightly captures the need for better and more specific governmental regulations in the sphere of usage of applied research findings so to ensure that publicly funded research is to serve the best public interest first. Simply put, the government, as a contractor, should specify how products of publicly funded research are to be used and who are to benefit from it. While some research projects result in nothing but academic publications, others bring millions of dollars in revenues.

Negative impact on academic research and scholarship may take different forms. Washburn states that secrecy and delays in publication of research findings are a norm for the last two decades. She asserts that “Were the federal government to engage in some of the practices detailed in the chapters to come—preventing students from publishing their theses on time (in order to protect proprietary secrets), deleting information from academic papers prior to publication, suppressing research studies that uncover significant health threats—it would surely

provoke public outrage. The commercial sector's routine violation of these academic norms has been met with comparative silence.” (p. xi) The author mentions bureaucratic red tape while describing political debates and lobbying of medical research laboratories' interests in Congress (p. 67). The lobbying took place in regard of patenting medical findings that represented commercial value.

One should not discard the possibility of some public officials to be corrupt and public offices and departments to pursue their institutional interests. Discretion is one of the conditions for corruption and salience is one of the reasons corruption goes unidentified or unpunished. High degree of amalgamation of government and business is a characteristic of every nation and the U.S. is not an exception to it.

#### Changing structure of higher education

Idea of changing structure of higher education is based on both changes in internal structures of higher education institutions and changes in structures of external relations. Washburn notes that “The new commercial ethos in higher education is affecting more than just sciences and engineering. It is also changing the priorities of universities in ways that rise disturbing questions about what parents and students are getting in return for the increasingly steep tuitions they pay.” (p. xii) Changing structure of the national economy along with the tightening links between industries and universities lead to changing structures of universities themselves. Changing external demands lead to changes in priorities within academia. The author summarizes this in the following way: “Indeed, with the exception of the smaller liberal arts colleges, the job of undergraduate education often seems like a subsidiary activity at many universities today—a task farmed out to the growing army of part-time instructors who receive

no benefits and meager pay. As one disillusioned grad student explained to me: “Your first semester, the administration makes it clear what the real priorities are: ‘We’ve got to fill seats. We need a body in front of the classroom. Go teach.’” If you want to succeed in academia, he said, what matters are publications, prestige, and grant money. “Forget about teaching. Forget about broadening young people’s minds. Whatever you do, don’t spend a lot of time on that. It’s a waste of time.” (p. xiii) Yet another opinion indicates concern about abuse of university name or brand and prestige in the Enron case: “Harvard University should apologize to the people of California for having sold its research institutes and faculty members to corporations,’ concluded HarvardWatch, the student and alumni group that investigated and uncovered these ties.” (p. xvii) This is a good example of indirect participation in corporate fraud affecting alumni of the school through the school reputation. Watching reputation by the interested constituencies is important. However, at the end of the day each university will focus on what brings to it highest rate of return, be it healthcare, research, or instruction. The same will be true for each of these three divisions of university activities.

Washburn notes that “Bayh-Dole revolutionized university-industry relations. Since the act passed, U.S universities have seen more than a tenfold increase in the patents they generate, and industry funding for academic research has expanded at an annual rate of 8.1 percent, rising to \$2 billion in 2001—or five times more than in 1980. Although industry still supplies roughly 7 percent of overall university research funding, its support has grown faster than from any other single source, and its influence is generally thought to be far greater than this percentage would suggest.” (p. 9) Due to the practice of matching and cost sharing, the industry now influences around 25 percent of university research funding. This is consistent with Congress’s mandate to transfer academic knowledge to the marketplace for the public’s benefit.

Growing burden to the students is obvious. Since 1980, college tuition and fees at public universities have increased at three times the rate of inflation, rising over 50 percent in real terms over the past decade alone. More loans caused average cumulative debt for a graduating senior to rise from \$9,800 in 1992 to \$18,000 in 2000 (xiii). At the same time, share of the state funding for public universities consistently decreases. Washburn notes that “At Penn State the state’s contribution to core educational operations fell from 54 percent in 1976-1977 to 31 percent in 2001-2002. The share of the University of Virginia’s budget coming from the state declined from roughly 28 percent in 1985 to just 8.1 percent in 2003.” (p. xiv) The author asserts that most of the nation’s public universities and colleges experienced same decline in state funding. This may have negative impact on accessibility of higher education as well as the financial burden of graduating students. Even though this information can be considered as an attempt to establish an argument about the monetary base for corrupt activities, it appears to be irrelevant.

### Abuse

False expectations along with abuse of public money constitute abuse in higher education. False expectations of students to be taught by professors and not teaching assistants, unmet expectations of recent graduates to find a job in industry, and parents’ frustrations about the quality of education are all results of poorly specified conditions and breach of contract between the clients and providers of educational services and not necessarily between public in general and universities in general. In order to enforce the rules and prevent numerous forms of abuse in many activities of the universities their consideration should be extended from the realms of ethical and social responsibilities into the realms of economic and legal responsibilities.

Another form of false expectations comes from ungrounded or poorly calculated attempts to replicate sound success stories for narrow political reasons or even in pursuit of public benefit. As the author points out, state governors and legislators “have exacerbated this trend by pushing universities to pour resources into commercially oriented research centers, in fields like medicine and biotechnology, hoping to spawn ‘the next Silicon Valley’ in their backyards. Many of these same politicians have been considerably less generous when it comes to financing the universities’ general funds (which actually go toward educating students).” (p. xiii)

Abuse of public money through the system of public higher education institutions, presented by the author, is not explicitly clear: “U.S. colleges and universities, whether they are public or private, enjoy enormous levels of public subsidy: basic science; liberal education; independent, publishable research. Every year, the federal government pays roughly \$20 billion in taxpayer money to subsidize the research at our nation’s colleges and universities, and another \$60 billion more in loans and grants to help financially disadvantaged students attend these schools. At the state and local levels, taxpayer contributions to higher education now run around \$68 billion. In addition, hundreds of thousands of Americans carefully put aside their hard-earned income to pay for tuition, room and board, books, and other expenses needed to send their kids to college. It is up to them—up to all of us—to make sure that the world of higher education is not for sale.” (p. xx) This may be regarded as a reason why deviations from the prime mission can be considered as corruption, even though it all has to be quantified.

Another form of abuse is related to misinforming the public about the assets, valuations, or other market or corporate conditions by using prestige of university professors or name of the school as well as abuse of the school name by the faculty who become involved in such unethical or illegal activities. The example presented by Washburn targets faculty members at Harvard:



“Enron paid handsome consulting fees to several professors at the Harvard Business School, which produced a series of glowing studies about the company that would soon make headlines for its accounting scandals.” (p. xvii)

Washburn targets some of the problematic issues in higher education industry, paints it in dark colors and means it to be corruption, even though she does not name it as such. This process of labeling problematic issues should be at least complimented by identification of potential niches for corruption in its legal and economic senses, as follows from the finding that: “In some labs it’s routine to still other people’s work. Too often the junior scientists are willing to be abused. They know their advisor is stealing their work, but they think they need to stay and get a good recommendation.” (p. 85) Many students are interested in copyrighting their research and limiting public access to it in anticipation of future contracts and employment.

Legal aspects of industry-university relations are subjects of tax policy, antitrust regulations, and patent laws. Fairweather (1988) suggests that: “The resolution of conflicting legal positions through contractual means is a prerequisite to establishing industry-university liaisons, particularly research relationships. These legal issues concern patent rights, copyrights, royalties, and other intellectual property rights; commingling of industrial and federal research funds; and use of corporate or university name.” (p. 48) Secrecy and proprietary rights that threaten promotion of open publication of research results as well as the merit based choice of research topics are also issues.

University administrators should be cautious about taking equities in for-profit organizations (Peters and Fusfeld, 1983, p. 112), and be ready to govern potential conflicts of interest resulting from faculty entrepreneurship (Fowler, 1984; Johnson, 1984; Kenney, 1986; Wofsy, 1986). Latest investigations conducted in 2007 by the Attorney General of the State of

New York Mr. Cuomo point toward possible corrupt links between colleges and educational loans industry as well as abuse of office by some financial aid officers (Field and Keller, 2007).

### Changing realities

Washburn quotes Nussbaum saying: “When we ask about the relationship of a liberal education to citizenship, we are asking a question with a long history in the Western philosophical tradition. We are drawing on Socrates’ concept of “the examined life,” on Aristotle’s notions of a reflective citizenship, and above all on Greek and Roman Stoic notions of an education that is “liberal” in that it liberates the mind from the bondage of habit and custom, producing people who can function with sensitivity and alertness as citizens of the whole world.” (p. xix) This takes us back to ancient schools of thought and medieval universities of Bologna and Paris.

Medieval universities as predecessors of the modern higher education institutions were mostly irrelevant to the systems of production existed in the dark ages. Knowledge, generated in universities as well as educated individuals were not utilized on a systemic basis in national economy. In fact, there was no such thing as a national economy at that time (Osipian, 2007). Pre-industrial era may be characterized by low level productivity without substantial innovations on the basis of non-economic incentives for humans to participate in production, i.e. “human in production.” In the industrial era that continues till now universities serve needs of the industry and humans are attached to industrial production through mostly economic incentives, i.e. “humans for production.” This is true for the U.S. with its market economy as well as for the USSR with its planned economy and manpower forecasting. One may only speculate that in the future there will be “production for human”, and not otherwise. This futuristic view may well

justify prerogative of liberal education and liberation of university from its servitude for the industry. The author seems to be jumping ahead to this stage of futurism by stating that: “To question the growing commercialization of our universities is not to denigrate the value of markets themselves. The problem arises when markets are presumed to be so perfect—so superior to any other form of social organization—that they are permitted to penetrate areas formerly governed by other considerations.” (p. xvii) Washburn refers to a philosophy professor at the University of Massachusetts who cautioned that “The point at which we look to nothing but demand to determine what a university should offer is the point at which the market becomes the enemy of excellence.” (p. xiv)

Washburn points out that “in comparison with their European counterparts, universities in the United States have always displayed a strong utilitarian bent. In founding the University of Virginia in 1825, Thomas Jefferson sought to provide ‘an useful American education.’ He recommended the study of agriculture because ‘it is the first in utility,’ and expressed appreciation of the natural sciences, civil history, and law because of their direct application to nation building.” (p. 26)

Utilitarianism and industry orientation of American universities is obvious. This is how the author describes process of establishing schools of applied sciences: “From 1824 to 1861 an array of new technical schools were built—Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (1824), Harvard’s Lawrence Scientific School (1847), Yale Sheffield Scientific School (1847), and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (1861)—precisely in order to meet the needs of a modernizing society.” (p. 30) Creation of the science programs in the universities does not contradict to pursuit of public interest. Washburn notices that: “The commitment to public service was perhaps best exemplified by the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Founded in

1848 to give ‘the *whole* people of the state an educational instruction suited to their wants,’ the university gradually extended its educational programs to serve the needs of local agriculture, industry, and government.” (p. 31)

The time of altruism and charitable donations is gone and will never be back. The system becomes more and more practical and operates on the rational basis. The charity is in most of the instances based on altruism, not rationality. It is normal for donors to expect something in return. Donations are replaced with contracts and orders. As individual’s education is considered more and more as an investment, so is private contribution to higher education institution becomes more of an investment rather than just a charity. This is normal within the frame of rational behavior. More and more for profit business-like colleges and universities emerge and successfully function in the U.S. Some of these universities establish and operate branches abroad, and some of the large educational corporations buy shares in foreign universities. As market is already present in higher education and higher education itself is already an industry, it is unrealistic to either ignore objectivity and rationality of such processes or describe them as corrupt.

Washburn presents very interesting perspective on the governance and concept of independency of U.S. universities, both private and public. While it is generally accepted that in distinction of their counterparts in other countries U.S. universities traditionally enjoy substantial or full degree of independency, and namely independency from the government, the author states that this independency is not perfect. She notices that university self-governance always was and still is an issue: “Not such latitude existed in America, where academic scholars failed to win these powers of self-governance. The founders of the first two colonial colleges, Harvard, and William and Mary, initially sought to emulate the European tradition of faculty control but after

a brief period of dual governance opted to transfer authority to an external board of laymen trustees, known as overseers or visitors... In time, the faculty would win broad powers over hiring and curricular decisions (and even some measure of participation in university governance), but the legacy of external control inevitably had the effect of making American universities more susceptible to outside influence.” (pp. 28, 29) Relative freedom from the government and self-governance alone do not constitute institutional independency. Even if they would, independency does not prevent universities or some faculty members and administrators to benefit from ethically thin or corrupt activities.

Washburn names religious, state, and business institutions as the major forces of influencing academia in different moments in time: “Much of what we value most about higher education today—academic freedom, the commitment to open inquiry and disinterested research, the ideal of a well-rounded education—exists because such voices warned against allowing external forces (religious authorities, the government, the private sector) to threaten these distinctive values.” (p. 27) As religious agenda is gone and the state agenda is narrowing down to different forms of regulatory control and decreasing funding, corporate world’s influence on academia is strong as never before. U.S. universities are very complex institutions and at the same time very open ones. As they become more effective and efficient in producing certain products and services, they become more subjected to the diseases of the corporate world, such as financial fraud, white-collar crime, embezzlement, abuse of publicly funded enterprises etc. These are all niches to search for corruption. Tripartite system that includes government, higher education, and business is now transforming into bipolar world with the regulatory restrictions from the government on one hand and industries, including commercializing industry of higher education on the other hand. As it might be of a surprise, it comes along with the Washburn’s

prescriptions for saving the nature of higher education. She suggests independent, third party licensing for quality, amending Bayh-Dole Act, strengthening federal conflict of interest regulations for faculty, administrators, and managers, and federal oversight of clinical research. What does not fit into this view is her idea of knowledge for knowledge's sake.

### Discussion

One of the aspects of the discussion about the role of higher education industry in modernizing world and influence of the corporate world on it lies in the understanding of whether the universities were “invited” to participate in the market economy or they were actively seeking such participation. Oblinger and Verville (1998) point out the following: “If you ask almost anyone in business or industry why they are concerned about higher education, three responses would dominate: We need employees who come to our business ready to work; We desperately need teachers who can help improve achievement in K-12 Education; We need a system of lifelong learning for all of our citizens.” (p. 19)

This approach appears to be as limited as it can possibly be. It ignores view of higher education as an industry and a part of the corporate world as well as an important consumer of all kinds of goods and services that industries supply to higher education institutions. Needless to say that as universities are significant providers of healthcare services, such approach does not capture even half of what may be by now regarded as a product of higher education industry. One thing it expresses clearly is the fact that education exists for industry, i.e. “human is for production.”

Referring to Ashford (1983) and Caldert (1983), Fairweather (1988) asserts that “A major tenet of academe is that faculty control the selection of research topics and the methods of

conducting research. The concept of “academic freedom” also includes the obligation to encourage the free flow of information through publication and a variety of other mechanisms.” (p. 49) Washburn favors this way of organizing research and defining its priorities and directions for development, while Newfield presents the opposite point of view by stating that “Industry did not respond to its economic problems by imposing itself on the university. The university actively pursued closer relations with industry. Nor did university administrators impose industry sponsorship on reluctant faculty. Faculty actively pursued this sponsorship.” (Newfield, 2003, p. 174)

Market-based incentives lead to rational behavior among faculty and university administrators that in its turn leads to marketization of higher education institutions. These transformational processes may be described in a more detailed way as the following: market relations materialize and develop in specific industries, including knowledge-intensive ones that often consist of professional organizations; industries signal about their needs, including needs in high skilled labor force, know-how, and research to higher education institutions; needs of the industries shape the demand on products, produced by universities; this demand, i.e. ability and willingness of industries to pay initiates rational behavior among faculty, administrators etc.; rational behavior, when reaches certain threshold, leads to changes in university structure, priorities, functions, and mission; finally, it leads to explicit market orientation of the universities, also known as commercialization, and abuse of the system in different ways.

Abuse of the system may be a result of rational behavior and it may be derived from commercialization. The streamline of transformation of market relations into commercialization of higher education and abuse of university mission as well as different functions of higher education institutions is presented on the Figure 2.

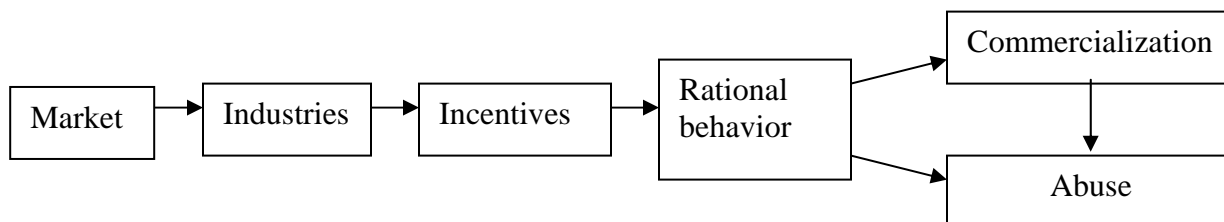


Figure 2. Transformation of market relations into commercialization and abuse

For this scheme, Washburn sees corruption as a process at the stage of “Incentives” and corruption as an outcome at the stage of “Rational behavior.” We would suggest focusing on the stage of “Commercialization,” as a base for corruption, and most of all on ‘Abuse’ that comes directly from the “Rational behavior” and indirectly through “Commercialization.” Link between “Rational behavior” and “Commercialization” may also be considered as perversion of purpose, but only when it can really be characterized as such.

#### Categorization of corruption

One of the weak sides of the work is that the author does not derive different possible categorizations of corruption in higher education institutions from the white-collar crime literature, microeconomics, development economics, principal-agent theories, public policy etc., including categorization by severity of the crime, type of crime, or operational function. One may establish four categorizations that might be useful in conducting research on corruption in higher education. These include motive, legal vs. illegal, where corruption occurs, and intensity of corruption (Segal, 2004).



One should not consider four approaches to categorizing corruption, including motive, legal vs. illegal, where corruption occurs, and intensity of corruption, as exhaustive. Hallak and Poisson (2007) present a compelling review of several categorizations of corruption along with a conceptual frame for corruption in education. Such synthesis allows for appreciation of the complexity of the phenomenon of education corruption. Further categorization of corruption is necessary in the fields of higher education policy, economics, and management.

Different authors use the word *corruption* in different contexts, expressing different meanings. The word comes from the Latin *corruptio*, which in Medieval Latin expressed a moral decay, wicked behavior, putridity, rottenness. It was consistent with the classical notion of corruption, comprising in the ancient Greece less the actions of individuals than the moral health of whole societies (Johnston, 1996, p. 322). The author should be given credit for capturing the essence of corruption in terms of *corruptio*, and differentiating between the two. Washburn states that negative influence of corporate world and the behavior of faculty and administrators lead to corruption in the functioning of the system, perverting educational purposes, i.e. negatively influencing processes of teaching and learning as well as independent fundamental research. This leads to the conversion of corruption as an illegal activity into *corruptio* as perversion of major purpose.

Definitions of corruption and discussions of the category in fields of political science and economics may be found in works of Anechiarico and Jacobs (1996), Bardhan (1997), Berg, Hahn, and Schmidhauser (1976), Johnston (1982), Keller (1978), Lasswell and Rogow (1963), Noonan (1983), (Nye, 1967), Rose-Ackerman (1978, 1999), Tirole (1992). Johnston summarizes the definitional problem: “We should not expect to find a sharp distinction between corruption and no corrupt actions. Instead, we will find fine gradations of judgment, reflecting a variety of

equivocations, mitigating circumstances, and attributed motives.” (Johnston, 1986, p. 379) Callow concludes that: “Perhaps the heart of the issue is not the kind of graft or who perpetrates it or even its magnitude but rather its impact upon the democratic process. Graft of any kind breeds distrust. Distrust breeds cynicism. Cynicism is the most powerful enemy of the democratic representative process.” (Callow, 1976, p. 144) Abuse of public interest as well as public funds, mentioned by the author on multiple occasions, creates negative feelings and distrust among the public in regard of higher education and corporate influence on academia in particular.

The definition most cited in the political literature is given by Nye: “Corruption is behavior which deviates from the normal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (family, close private clique), pecuniary or status gains, or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence. This includes such behavior as bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reasons of ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private-regarding use).” (Nye, 1967, p. 419) Such definition is clearly limited to illegal or ethically questionable acts and does not fit into the Washburn’s agenda.

Sayed and Bruce (1998) and Waite and Allen (2003) present a broad social approach to definition of corruption. Petrov and Temple (2004) apply a narrow definition of corruption that regards corruption as such only if it implies illegality. Definition of education corruption includes the abuse of authority for material gain (Anechiarico and Jacobs, 1996) and is defined as the abuse or misuse of public office or public trust for personal or private gain. Heyneman points to the fact that education is a public good and “... because education is an important

public good, its professional standards include more than just material goods; hence the definition of education corruption includes the abuse of authority for personal as well as material gain.” (Heyneman, 2004, p. 638) Corruption in the education sector can be defined as “the systematic use of public office for private benefit, whose impact is significant on the availability and quality of educational goods and services, and, as a consequence on access, quality or equity in education” (Hallak and Poisson, 2002). Hallak and Poisson (2007) maintain the systemic character of education corruption. Corruption in higher education may be defined as a system of informal relations established to regulate unsanctioned access to material and nonmaterial assets through abuse of the office of public or corporate trust (Osipian, 2007)

### Methodology

While categorization of corruption was at the stages of its development and revision over the last two decades, methodology of studying corruption is at best in its infancy. There are two major methods applied in research on corruption. Economists tend to focus on survey-based quantitative methodologies. Due to the immanent secrecy and illegality of the subject matter of the research, one of the major challenges here is reliability of the data. Moreover, the research is focused on corruption in developing countries where obtaining reliable data is an immense challenge. In political science and public policy methodology of research on corruption is narrowed down to case studies and reminds more of investigations and journalistic-style commentaries rather than rigorous scholarly work.

As may be seen from the most recent work on corruption in education (Segal, 2004; Washburn, 2005), case studies supplemented with superficial analysis constitute bulk of what might be interpreted as a research methodology. Multiplicity of cases of corruption referred to in

these studies pushes them beyond the borders of simple case study yet insufficient to move into the realm of quantitative research. At the same time this overload with cases does not carry with it sufficient portion of analysis and synthesis and other qualitative methods that would be of great benefit to the research. At this stage research on corruption in education, and higher education in particular, is almost nonexistent. Accordingly, methodology used in first attempts to research the issue may at best replicate methodology used in the field of development economics and in the field of public policy. As higher education becomes more of a business-like operated industry, methodology borrowed from the white-collar crime theories might also be of help. Import of categorical apparatus and research methodology from these fields and their adaptation to the field of education and higher education in particular might be the major task for research on education corruption.

Development of research methodology in the fields of development economics and public policy will facilitate further development of categorical apparatus. These developments will further be utilized in studying corruption in education.

Basic methodology that may be applied in studies of corruption in higher education may be formulated as the sequence of the following steps:

- Identification and demonstration of relevant and necessary grounds for corruption to exist, including intensity of monetary transactions in the system;
- Identification of preconditions for corruption to exist, including complexity of the system, presence of the comprehensive legal system, and discretion, delegated to public officials. All of these should be carefully weighted on the scale of their relative values, significance, and level of development.

- Specification of the necessary conditions for corruption. These may include imperfect legal system and imperfect market system. Defining conditions for corruption will depend upon the concepts and frames used to determine and categorize corruption.
- Presenting evidence of corruption by using illustrative techniques borrowed from both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.
- Describing building blocks of corruption in the industry.
- Presenting system of corruption as a whole, with its net of interrelations and agents participating in such net. This will involve intensive use of method of analysis and synthesis and lead to generalizations.
- Finally, generalization will be used as a platform or a starting point for deduction.

Deduction will allow for identifying otherwise invisible pockets of corruption.

Method of induction, proposed above, should be used in studying corruption in higher education based on particular cases is grounded in works of Baronov (2004), Bernard (2000), Dubs (1930), Hempel and Oppenheim (1948), and Law (2004).

Washburn offers an overview of the impact of industries on higher education institutions, based on history and numerous cases and not theories. Then she proceeds to more detailed cases. Numerous detailed cases are followed by generalizations, based on quotes and cases and not concepts or theories. These generalizations are incomplete; they do not serve as a base for deriving any theories and instead create more problems in understanding what is corrupt and what is not and why. One should approach the subject matter of this study from the position that the entire system of higher education in the U.S. is not corrupt. Consequently, the author should have chosen method of nomological deduction in order to identify corruption in the system.

First, general picture of higher education and its relations with business should be presented. This general picture should be supported by comprehensive statistics, not case by case figures, examples, and quotes. General overview and relevant statistical data should be used to present scientific description of the system. Precise multilateral description of the system will serve as a ground for investigating corruption in different aspects and from different standpoints.

Second, different theoretical lenses should be applied to highlight different aspects of the system and its interrelations with businesses, public sector, and the government. This should be followed by method of analysis and synthesis that will lead to reproduction of the system in more concrete form. This process is also known as the rise from abstract to concrete.

Third, based on the complete picture of the system obtained in the process of moving from abstract to concrete and analysis and synthesis, the author should define potential room for corruption. It may be done by the way of constructing hypotheses and testing them. Based on the knowledge of potential niches for corrupt activities, corruption should be searched for and if found, it will prove the hypotheses.

Finally, cases of corruption should be further explained, and the investigative part of the research concluded. New knowledge, obtained during the process of investigation should add to already existing theories.

Unfortunately, Washburn uses little of analysis and none of synthesis. Instead, she uses cases that lead to some ideas and further on to often unconvincing generalizations. All analysis is limited to the general overview of the system. Washburn does not look for pockets of corruption. Instead, she is trying to prove that due to some external influence the system of higher education in its essence becomes corrupt. In this context terms *eroded* or *changed* appear to be more appropriate than sound and attractive term *corrupt*. Process of adaptation does not lead to more

corruption or becoming more corrupt. The task of proving this appears to be very problematic. One can only try to argue for such things from theoretical grounds, including strong philosophical argumentation. Unfortunately, the author does not use them at all. Instead, she relies on cases, expressions, common sense, and leaves the judgment up to the reader. The reader is to decide whether each particular instance constitutes act of corruption or otherwise.

To the author's credit we should admit that some of the cases described do fall into the category of corruption, gross waste, or abuse. However, these cases are not further analyzed as was suggested in the sequence of nomological deduction. Normative judgments about good and bad for the system are not necessarily substitutes to judgments about corrupt or otherwise. Bad does not necessarily mean corrupt. Negative impact does not necessarily mean corruption and does not necessarily serve as a ground for corruption.

### **Concluding remarks**

The author does not present the reader with comparative perspective of the researched issue. While elements of comparative approach, or simple comparisons, are used in several instances, they are not followed by a thorough analysis. Comparative approach is not applied on a systematic basis. Comparative analysis might be very beneficial to the work as the author attempts to justify the argument that influence of industries on academia corrupts the latter. Description of how this problem is resolved in Europe as well as in the USSR might be of especial value. While U.S. universities combine functions of education and research, in the former USSR research was a prerogative of research institutions, state owned entities that existed separately from academic institutions and in most of the cases were not accountable to the Ministry of Education.

The author presents good historical overview of the problem, illustrated by the numerous cases of business-university relations and projects as well as political debates and major decisions followed by the changes in legislation. However, the stages of development of influence of industries on academia and process of its corruption are not explicitly stated in the book. The book is overloaded with very illustrative examples of commercialization or corruptness of industry-university relations and many figures are presented in order to support the author's argumentation. Nevertheless, the book does not present the whole picture of such relations and the abuse that arises from commercialization. The scope and scale of commercialization as well as the higher education industry overall, the structure of the national economy in both absolute and relative terms, scale and scope, comprehensive statistical data, as well as estimates, predictions, and extrapolations would be very beneficial for the book. Presenting the scale and structure of the industries that influence higher education and higher education industry itself, along with the scale of their interaction, enriched by the predicted values of abuse and corruption in different forms seems to be an absolutely necessary part for this kind of research. The question of "how big are these processes nationwide?" is by and large left on the reader's imagination and discretion.

The book is distinct by its flamboyant journalistic style, rather than the style that characterizes scholarly research. The book does not make a significant methodological contribution into the interdisciplinary subfield of corruption. It neither develops new nor uses already developed categories. Categorical apparatus normally utilized in research on corruption is almost absent. No research method in strict sense is used in the book. Some elements of the descriptive analysis may be found in the book, but no synthesis. There are no methods of induction or deduction used, and generalizations, presented by the author, are very vague and



incomplete. The structure of the book does not adhere closely to any particular scientific method of inquiry. The entire structure is focused on building the general line that substantiates the argument and supports the author's position. There are no competing views or explanations presented in the book. This creates feeling of slight biasness in the judgments about the degree of corruptness of different practices of commercialization. The same is far to say about conceptualization of the author's agenda, presented in the book.

Because of its unsophisticated methodological design, the book does not make a significant theoretical contribution to the field. It does not use explicitly theoretical frames or lenses, nor does it create new theories or even makes incremental, new developments.

The book is a culmination of writings on commercialization of the U.S. higher education. It stands in one row with works of Ashford (1983), Caldert (1983), Johnson (1984), Aslanian et al. (1988), Duggan et al. (1988), Fairweather (1988), Boyles (1998), Oblinger and Verville (1998), Newfield (2003), Molnar (2005), and others. In distinction of these books, Washburn does not present a theoretically sophisticated research. Her work is limited by descriptive analysis. It may be considered as a culmination of works on commercialization of higher education and especially those focused on negative impact of such process on the primary mission of academia in a sense that it first uses term "corruption" in its title, even though it takes a meaning of a process rather than a fact. For this reason the book is neither groundbreaking nor revolutionary one. It can not be viewed as a revolutionary work first of all because of the absence of a substantial theoretical and methodological contribution to the interdisciplinary field of corruption as well as by the lack of sophisticated theoretical lenses and frameworks applied in the research. It is obvious that deeper theoretical developments are needed. The book does not bear any methodological novelty, clear definitions and operational categories, and new methods.

One of the flaws we would also like to point out is that the book does not appreciate or support plurality of forms in its study of higher education--industry nexus. The author stands on unitary positions and apparently ignores the fact that the system is already diverse and continues its development along the lines of plurality of forms of ownership, management, and governance. Also, all attention is given to Ivy League schools and some of the “wanna be” universities, while most of the higher education institutions are left aside, even though they provide most of the educational services in the nation. Higher education may not be limited to the major research universities and would be diseases, attributed to them and caused by their close ties with businesses, are not a characteristic for the entire higher education industry.

There are many aspects of university-industry relations that were left aside, including intrusion of the defense industry, Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTCs), and varsity sports or intercollegiate athletics as a part of sport industry. It would be interesting to see if there are any pockets for corruption created by these ties and what exactly they are. Another aspect that was left unattended is about the fact that people come to academia from industries, public sector, and government. Some of these newly appointed professors, researchers, administrators, and physicians were practicing corruption in their institutions and now bring culture of corruption into the world of scholarship. Discovering such aspects would be way more productive and beneficial to the issue of corruption than pointing out how much the indicators of educational debts of recent graduates have risen over the last decades.

Finally, while describing the industry as something alien to academia, the author does not want to fully accept the fact that academia is constantly changing, and it has a right to do so. Higher education does not have to be very distinct from what is considered as traditional industries or business. Higher education itself is an industry. As the mass media does not just

work for the corporate world any more but is itself a part of the corporate world, higher education institutions will become more and more of corporations and processes of teaching and learning, research, and provision of healthcare services will adopt businesslike models. The author has every right to consider such processes as negatively affecting the public interest, but she has yet to substantiate her stance.

The book would be of high interest for policymakers, managers, and theorists. While policymakers, university administrators, and business managers will appreciate good description of forms of cooperation of industries and universities as well as problems that such cooperation creates or exacerbates and some of the prescriptions, offered by the author, theorists will find wealth of material on which to build some concepts and theories of social and ethical responsibility versus commercialization and perhaps even some interesting niches for possible corrupt activities in higher education.

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